GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2205
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2007
PREFERENTIAL TRADE AGREEMENT
Lagadapati Shri Rajagopal

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Study Group of India and Israel recommended for a Preferential Trade Agreement between India and Israel;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any negotiations on this issue was held with the visiting Deputy Prime Minister of Israel;

(d) if so, the details of the discussion held;

(e) whether the issue long-term Visas to diamond traders of India has been raised during the talks; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Israel thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E.AHAMED)

(a-b) The report of the India-Israel Joint Study Group adopted in November 2005 included agreement that both sides will promote negotiations for the establishment of a Preferential Trade Agreement which would be compatible with WTO rules for mutual and shared benefits. The draft of a Preferential Trade Agreement was handed over by the Indian side to the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour of Israel in February 2006.

(c-d) During the visit of Hon`ble Mr. Eliyahu Yishai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry, Trade & Labour of Israel to India from December 2-8, 2006, both sides welcomed the initiation of discussions on the Preferential Trade Agreement.

(e) Yes.

(f) The Government of Israel has since informed that one-year business visas would be issued to diamond business persons of Indian origin in Israel.